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# Bob Hawke says John Bannon wore too much blame for bank collapse

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Former prime minister Bob Hawke says the late South Australian premier John Bannon was a man of "total decency" who accepted responsibility beyond the bounds of necessity when the State Bank of South Australia collapsed in 1991, and he still has a deep affection for him.

Mr Hawke was among the mourners at the state funeral for Mr Bannon, held in Adelaide's St Peter's Cathedral on Monday. Among them were former prime minister Julia Gillard, federal Labor leader Bill Shorten, frontbencher Anthony Albanese and eminent lawyer Geoffrey Robertson/ QC.

Mr Bannon died on December 13 after a long battle with cancer at the age of 72. He was premier of South Australia for a decade until resigning in 1992 following the collapse of the State Bank under debts

Bannon blamed too much for bank: Bob Hawke says John Bannon was a man of "total decency". JVE

of more than $3 billion after risky lending decisions in the heady late 1980s made under the watch of bank managing director Tim Marcus Clark and the bank's board.

Mr Hawke, speaking outside the church before the service began, said Mr Bannon had accepted too much of the blame.

"He was a man of total decency, enormous capacity and very self-effacing," Mr Hawke told reporters. "He accepted responsibility beyond the bounds of necessity in the case of the bank.

Mr Hawke, who has just turned 86 and walks uses a walking stick, said Mr Bannon would be remembered fondly both in South Australia and at a national level.

Other dignitaries included South Australian Premier Jay Weatherill, who read one of the scriptures during the 65-minute service and later hosted a wake at the nearby Adelaide Oval.

Former South Australian premier Mike Rann, who held power from 2002 to 2011 before being elbowed aside by factional bosses to make way for Mr Weatherill, was one of the pallbearers.

Former South Australian Liberal premiers John Olsen and Dean Brown, both adversaries of Mr Bannon, also attended, along with former federal Labor foreign minister Gareth Evans.

Film-maker Scott Hicks, best known as the director of Oscar-winning film *Shine*, was also one of the mourners, along with Senator Penny Wong, and Marjorie Jackson-Nelson, the former Olympic gold medallist in athletics in the 1950s who was South Australian governor from 2001 to 2007.

Mr Shorten told reporters before the service that Mr Bannon was the "father" of the Australian submarine program, and had also shown enormous resilience after resigning from politics.

"He had very tough times as he rebuilt his own career, so I think there's a lot of lessons in John Bannon's career for a lot of Australians," Mr Shorten said.

Lynn Arnold, who retrained as a priest after a career in politics where he became South Australian premier in 1992 after Mr Bannon resigned, but was trounced at the next election, was the assistant priest for the service and led one of the prayers.

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